

From: [James Rubin](#)
Bcc: [Emily.weber@mail.house.gov](#); [janette.yarwood@mail.house.gov](#); [ryan.uyehara@mail.house.gov](#); [james.hampson@mail.house.gov](#); [will.strother@mail.house.gov](#); [christian.kreuger@mail.house.gov](#); [osbert.david@mail.house.gov](#); [mark.erste@mail.house.gov](#); [sarah.trister@mail.house.gov](#); [molly.claire.cole@mail.house.gov](#); [bradley.hart@mail.house.gov](#); [troy.dougall@mail.house.gov](#); [jessie.durrett@mail.house.gov](#); [jason.steinbaum@mail.house.gov](#); [david.kimelman@mail.house.gov](#); [michael.mccabe@mail.house.gov](#); [bubba.white@mail.house.gov](#); [stacy.thompson@mail.house.gov](#); [gabrielle.gould@mail.house.gov](#); [sebastian.deluca@mail.house.gov](#); [catherine.rowland@mail.house.gov](#); [corey.jacobson@mail.house.gov](#); [sarah.miller@mail.house.gov](#); [thomas.rice@mail.house.gov](#); [florence.akinyemi@mail.house.gov](#); [ryan.morgan@mail.house.gov](#); [Hillary.Lassiter@mail.house.gov](#); [Chris.Herenandez@mail.house.gov](#); [sophie.mirviss@mail.house.gov](#); [Mike.D-Orazio@mail.house.gov](#); [Joe.bartlett@mail.house.gov](#); [erik.kinney@mail.house.gov](#); [Michelle.Schein@mail.house.gov](#); [Chelsea.Filner@mail.house.gov](#); [piero.tozzi@mail.house.gov](#); [erica.riordan@mail.house.gov](#); [christina.tsasoulas@mail.house.gov](#); [eddie.meyer@mail.house.gov](#); [molly.eurke@mail.house.gov](#); [tim.churchill@mail.house.gov](#); [zach.fowler@mail.house.gov](#); [oren.abaki@mail.house.gov](#); [blair.rotert@mail.house.gov](#); [Colin.Timmerman@mail.house.gov](#); [sara.matar@mail.house.gov](#); [amber.bland@barrasso.senate.gov](#); [sophia.lani@booker.senate.gov](#); [algene.sajery@cardin.senate.gov](#); [thomas.mancinelli@coons.senate.gov](#); [ricardo.pita@cruz.senate.gov](#); [igor.khrestin@gardner.senate.gov](#); [aaron.strickland@lgraham.senate.gov](#); [kate.hunter@isakson.senate.gov](#); [carol.foster@ronjohnson.senate.gov](#); [guy.nentel@kaine.senate.gov](#); [zachary.hossord@markey.senate.gov](#); [sarah.arkin@menendez.senate.gov](#); [matt.squeri@merkley.senate.gov](#); [jessica.elledge@murphy.senate.gov](#); [jim.webb@paul.senate.gov](#); [wayne.jones@portman.senate.gov](#); [kevin.henwood@romney.senate.gov](#); [katie.perry@rubio.senate.gov](#); [naz.durakoglu@shaheen.senate.gov](#); [matthew.padilla@tomudall.senate.gov](#); [brandt.anderson@young.senate.gov](#)
Subject: Latest Developments Regarding the Dominican Republic
Date: Tuesday, February 11, 2020 12:33:00 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)

I thought you might be interested in the latest developments regarding the Dominican Republic.

This material is distributed by Ballard Partners on behalf of the Government of the Dominican Republic. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

Dominican Economy Leads Latin America

- The Central Bank announced that the country's economic growth reached 5.1% in 2019, the largest of any other country in Latin America. The agricultural sector grew 10.5%, construction sector grew 10.5%, financial services grew 9%, energy and water grew 7.4%, transportation grew 5.3%, and healthcare grew 4.3%.
- In 2019, exports rose to \$11.4 billion, an increase of 4.7% compared to 2018, with the largest exports being: gold, cigars, circuit breakers, medical instruments, jewelry, and ferronickel items.
- The U.S. has been the country's main trade partner with exports to the U.S. reaching \$5.1 billion in 2019.
- In 2019, 133,713 new jobs were created lowering the unemployment rate in the last quarter of 2019 to 5.9%.
- The Central Bank announced that FDI in 2019 reached \$3,012.8 million, an increase of 18.8% from 2018, greatly surpassing other Latin American countries.
- 70% of the country's FDI is invested into tourism, commerce, and real estate, with the largest countries of origin being the U.S., Canada, Brazil, Spain, and Mexico.
- Due to its low inflation and exchange stability, the country has an average growth of 6.2% between 2013-2018, making it the fastest growing economy in Latin America, and one of the most dynamic economies in the world.
- FDI has reached about \$20.1 billion in the last seven years, putting the Dominican Republic in the top 10 of inflowing FDI in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- In the last 10 years FDI into the country has averaged about \$2.5 billion a year.
- In the last seven years, 735,027 formal jobs have been created in the commerce, construction, agriculture, manufacturing, energy, hospitality, service, and tourism industries, due to the government's employment program.
- In November 2019, government assets reached RD\$1.92 million, a growth of 10.99% compared to November 2018, with net assets reaching RD\$234,598.83 million, a 13.23% growth from the previous November.
- ROA was 2.38% in November 2019, compared to its ROA of 2.30% in November 2018, while the ROE was 19.69% in November 2019, compared to its ROE of 19.56% in November

2018.

- The Central Bank says that October 2019 saw 5.2% growth from October 2018, while September 2019 saw 5.1% growth from September 2018.
- Nationwide, the country has about 33 foreign capital projects underway with a total value of \$885 million.
- The country attributes its economic success to its low inflation, monetary exchange stability, job creation, the strengthening of macroeconomic fundamentals, implementing new fiscal economic policies, implementing new economic incentive reforms, the promotion of FDI, the liberalization of the investment regime, and enacting Law 16-95 which treats foreign investors with equal treatment to domestic investors.
- Studies show that companies that choose the Dominican Republic for FDI, reinvest more than 47% of their profits back into the country.
- The Dominican Republic is one of the fastest growing film destinations in Latin America with financial incentives, world class facilities, and diverse locations just a couple hours from the U.S. The 2018 reduction of withholding tax from 27% to 1.5% and the transferable tax credit of 25% on qualified expenditure for international productions has greatly increased the country's rising popularity in the industry.
- RealtyBiznews ranks the Dominican Republic as the 8th best country for overseas real estate markets for investment in 2020, citing its tourism growth of 6.2% in 2018 (above the world average growth of 6%) making it the most popular Caribbean destination (accounting for 20% of all traffic to the region), low beachfront and ocean-view housing and lot prices, appreciation as low as 3.5%, and rental returns between 9%-12%, as important factors contributing to its success as a prosperous real estate investment location.
- In 2018, the country exported \$1.7 billion in mined material, a 43% increase in these exports from 2010 to 2018.

<https://acento.com.do/2019/actualidad/8757303-bcrd-inversion-extranjera-directa-sobrepasara-este-ano-los-us2600-millones-superior-al-promediado-de-us2500-millones-de-ultimos-10-anos/>

<https://acento.com.do/2019/actualidad/8764673-activos-del-sistema-financiero-dominicano-ascendieron-a-rd-1-92-billones-al-mes-de-noviembre/>

<https://acento.com.do/2020/economia/8774529-bcrd-el-pib-crecio-5-1-en-2019-el-mayor-porcentaje-de-latinoamerica/>

<https://acento.com.do/2019/economia/8758694-banco-central-informa-actividad-economica-alcanzo-crecimiento-de-2-5-en-octubre/>

<https://dominicanotoday.com/dr/business-pleasure/2019/12/05/india-is-the-main-buyer-of-dr-minerals/>

<https://dominicanotoday.com/dr/economy/2019/12/02/foreign-direct-investment-companies-reinvest-47-of-their-profits/>

<https://www.screendaily.com/features/why-the-dominican-republic-is-one-of-the-fastest-growing-film-destinations-in-latin-america/5145303.article>

<https://dominicanotoday.com/dr/economy/2019/12/04/foreign-direct-investment-averaged-us2-5b-in-the-last-10-years/>

<https://realtybiznews.com/top-10-international-property-markets-for-investment-in-2020/98757038/>

<https://dominicanotoday.com/dr/local/2019/12/29/dominican-economy-generated-more-than-735000-new-formal-jobs-in-the-last-seven-years/>

<https://dominicanotoday.com/dr/economy/2019/12/31/central-bank-affirms-that-the-rd-economy-has-recovered/>

<https://dominicanotoday.com/dr/economy/2020/01/04/mexico-recognizes-macroeconomic-stability-of-dr/>

<https://dominicanotoday.com/dr/economy/2020/01/21/exports-rose-7-to-us-11423-million/>

<https://dominicanotoday.com/dr/economy/2020/01/28/dominican-economy-grew-5-1-in-2019-paced-by-construction/>

Tourism Industry Sees Recovery

- Tourism revenue grew 1.7% in 2019, compared to the previous year.
- Tourism is the country's largest source of foreign exchange, directly contributing 7.6% to the GDP and indirectly contributing 22% to the economy.
- U.S. tourists account for 60% of the Dominican tourism industry.
- The Dominican Republic is the top Caribbean destination for North American travelers in 2019, accounting for 29% of U.S. and Canadian travelers to the region.
- Visitor numbers from Europe grew exponentially in 2019, with Italian travelers up 30%, French tourists up 21% and Spaniard tourists up 9.5%.
- According to the World Tourism Organization the Dominican Republic ranked 4th out of 220 destinations. The country ranked 50th place in terms of tourist arrivals and 41st place in terms of income from those visitors.
- The Dominican Republic ranked 1st in the Central American region out of the 37 destinations evaluated, based on its arrivals, foreign exchange income, and world-class hotels.
- The Dominican Republic has opened an underwater museum to both protect and preserve historic shipwrecks and their coastal environments, providing both biological and archaeological protection efforts.
- A new tourism initiative, "The Real DR" has launched in the U.S. and focuses on testimonials from real tourists who share their experiences in the country.
- Former U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic James Brewster ensures tourists that the Dominican Republic is a "safe, warm and beautiful vacation destination", and praised the country's recent efforts to enhance the security of its visitors, stating that the country's "commitment to the safety and security of its tourists is stronger than ever".
- Former U.S. President Bill Clinton, stated, "This nation is well managed, and the people involved in the tourism industry are doing a good job", reassuring U.S. citizens that the Dominican Republic is a safe place to visit. He continued, "It's beautiful, and I think the

Dominican Republic is well on its way to full recovery from the little hiccup we had over the tourism.... This is a great place – and everybody should come here and see it.”

- TripAdvisor ranks Bahia Principe Luxury Cayo Levantado in the Dominican Republic as the 25th best all-inclusive in the world.

<https://aento.com.do/2019/actualidad/8756290-lanzan-campana-en-eem-para-contrarrestar-caida-del-turismo/>
<https://aento.com.do/2020/economia/8772533-francisco-javier-garcia-ingresos-por-turismo-crecieron-un-1-7-en-2019/>
<https://news.ri.edu/stories/2019/12/nub-releases/04-living-museum-sea-underwater-science.html>
<https://www.pnwswire.com/news-releases/former-us-ambassador-to-the-dominican-republic-reaffirms-the-islands-safety-and-security-300970374.html>
<https://dominantoday.com/dr/tourism/2019/12/06/former-us-envoy-lists-dominican-republic-wonders/>
<https://dominantoday.com/dr/economy/2019/12/12/dominican-republic-a-global-tourism-leader-still/>
<https://dominantoday.com/dr/tourism/2019/12/26/the-real-dr-campaign-with-stories-and-testimonials-from-real-tourists/>
<https://www.cnn.com/2020/01/07/cnn-underscored/best-all-inclusive-resorts/index.html>
<https://dominantoday.com/dr/tourism/2020/01/08/clinton-dominican-republic-is-a-safe-tourism-destination/>
<https://www.foxnews.com/world/bill-clinton-dominican-republic-american-deaths>
<https://www.breakingtravelnews.com/news/article/booming-american-economy-drives-tourism-growth-in-caribbean/>
<https://www.ehrlbnews.com/540619/tourism-to-the-caribbean-growth-in-2019/>

The Dominican Republic Continues to Increase Bilateral Relations

- In 2019, the Dominican Republic was the U.S.’s 9th fastest growing trade partner, increasing trade by nearly 7%.
- The U.S. ratifies its support for the Dominican Republic’s electoral process for “free, fair and transparent” elections, in February and May.
- Dominican Republic’s President Medina met with U.S. Assistant Treasury Secretary Marshall Billingslea to discuss countering international financial threats and agreed to enhance cooperation to thwart money laundering, drug trafficking, and human trafficking.
- U.S. Congressman Espaillat is introducing a resolution to the House on the importance of U.S.-Dominican Republic bilateral relations. The resolution highlights the Dominican Republic’s role as an important partner to the U.S. in hemispheric affairs, trade, diplomacy, tourism, and security cooperation.
- The Dominican Republic and Jamaica signed a memorandum of cooperation on investment and trade, creating a joint working group to strengthen economic relations, and promote information exchange and cooperation.
- The Dominican Republic and Colombia signed an MoU creating a Joint Council for the Promotion of Trade, Investments, and Production Chains.
- Broward County's Port Everglades and the Dominican Republic Port Authority signed an MoU as part of a Joint Sister Seaports agreement that will promote bilateral trade, establish an alliance to facilitate international trade, generate new businesses by promoting sea trade routes, create joint marketing activities and market studies, provide training, and increase the sharing of information on technology, modernization, and improvements.
- Port Everglades and the Dominican Republic reached a record of \$2.69 billion in trade in 2018.

<https://espaillat.house.gov/media/press-releases/senator-charles-e-schumer-and-congressman-adriano-espaillat-discuss-tourism>
<https://aento.com.do/2020/economia/8772809-republica-dominicana-y-jamaica-firman-acuerdo-para-fomentar-relaciones-economicas/>
<https://aento.com.do/2019/economia/8758530-autoridad-portuaria-dominicana-y-port-everglades-de-la-florida-conviene-acuerdo-de-facilidad-comercial/>
<https://dominantoday.com/dr/local/2019/12/21/us-ratifies-support-for-free-fair-and-transparent-elections/>
<https://www.plenish.com/index.php?o=m&id=49589&SEO=the-dominican-republic-and-colombia-sign-memorandum-of-understanding>
<https://dominantoday.com/dr/economy/2019/12/04/dominican-colombian-officials-agree-to-boost-trade/>
<https://www.maritimeprofessional.com/news/port-everglades-dominican-republic-port-353552>
<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/world/us-treasury-official-dominican-republic-lead-813145.html>
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenroberts/2020/01/22/the-10-fastest-growing-us-trade-partners-contain-some-surprises/#5fc2a6643645>

Technology, Transparency & Equality for 2020 Elections

- The Central Electoral Board (JCE) has passed 11 resolutions and 2 regulations related to the upcoming elections. The projects include specifics on manual and automated voting, as well as, specifics regarding the format and preparation of the ballots. The resolutions also cover preferential voting, proportional representation, accessibility of voting to the elderly and disabled, the integration and composition of the electoral colleges, and prohibiting weapons, cell phones, cameras, computers and packages in the precincts.
- The JCE has reported that of the 17,909 candidates running for municipal elected positions on February 16, 44.1% are women.
- Nearly 7.5 million people are registered to vote in the upcoming February 16th elections.
- JCE approved the use of fingerprint readers, to verify and guarantee voter identification for voters who use the automated voting system.
- The JCE is doing a forensic audit of the automated voting system to analyze source codes, the software functionality, integrity and security of the data, and the transparency of the system.

<https://aento.com.do/2020/politica/8766424-jce-siete-millones-y-medio-de-inscritos-para-votar-en-febrero/>
<https://aento.com.do/2020/actualidad/8769146-la-jce-aprueba-11-resoluciones-y-dos-reglamentos-para-las-elecciones/>
<https://aento.com.do/2020/actualidad/8775314-mujeres-representan-44-1-de-candidaturas-a-las-elecciones-municipales/>
<https://aento.com.do/2019/actualidad/8755907-la-jce-presenta-el-lector-de-huellas-para-el-voto-automatizado/>
<https://dominantoday.com/dr/local/2019/12/21/us-ratifies-support-for-free-fair-and-transparent-elections/>

The Dominican Republic Improves Quality of Life

President Medina has declared 2020 as the "Year of the Consolidation of Food Security", under decree 497-19, requesting that public and private institutions work together to implement initiatives and programs that promote food security.

- Law 589-16 created the National System for Food and Nutrition Sovereignty and Security.
- President Medina affirms the government's commitment to guaranteeing access to food, especially to the poorest and most vulnerable communities.
- In the first six months of 2019, homicides were down 7.6%, with homicides of women down 11%, when compared to the same period in 2018.
- The government recently broke ground on the Boca de los Ríos dam in Santiago Rodríguez, which will benefit thousands of farmers, providing 18.3 million gallons of drinking water per day for more than 40 rural and urban communities and will increase irrigable areas by approximately 5,400 hectares.

<https://acento.com.do/2019/actualidad/8765170-el-2020-es-declarado-ano-de-la-consolidacion-de-la-seguridad-alimentaria/>
<https://dominicanatoday.com/dr/local/2019/12/05/dominican-republic-reduces-homicides-by-7-6/>
<https://dominicanatoday.com/dr/local/2019/12/31/president-medina-declares-2020-as-the-year-of-food-security-consolidation/>
<https://dominicanatoday.com/dr/economy/2020/01/10/medina-breaks-ground-for-us37-7m-dam-in-nw/>

Dominican Republic Lessens Its Environmental Impact

- The Dominican Republic is working hard to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2030 and is working toward becoming carbon neutral by 2050.
- In an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions the country is reforesting over 119,000 acres and installing 604MW of solar and wind energy, which will account for a fourth of the country's energy matrix.
- The Dominican Republic has joined many other Caribbean countries in the banning of single-use plastic.
- The Dominican Republic joins Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Paraguay, and Peru in a commitment to produce 70% of renewable energy by 2030.
- A new 48.3MW wind farm opened in December. This 16-turbine park will save the government a predicted \$14 million a year in fossil fuel imports in this first phase, while the second phase will generate a savings of around \$30 million per year by producing 100MW of energy. The wind farm will reduce CO2 emissions, reduce the cost of electricity, create tons of jobs in the area, and help drive the economy.
- From 2013-2019, over 1,300MW of renewable energy have been added to the national grid.
- In November, a new 50MW solar park began operations, while another 58MW solar plant broke ground.
- Punta Cana-Coral Mania was created as an effort to restore the health of coral reefs in the Dominican Republic. Participants in the three-day event include restoration and conservatory groups, as well as, professionals from the public and private sectors, who planted coral fragments in an effort to reduce the effects that climate change, coral disease, and unsustainable fishing practices have had on the natural environment.
- In 2016, the Dominican Republic started working on producing renewable energy to contribute to the National Interconnected Electricity System (SENI). In the last three years the country has diversified its energy matrix by adding solar, water, biomass, and wind energy, now totaling 26 hydroelectric plants, nine wind turbine plants, a biomass plant, and two solar plants.
- In the first six-months of 2019, renewable energy sources contributed 1,066.98GW per hour to the SENI, and by the end of the year there had been \$530 million invested in renewable energy projects.

<https://www.nrdc.org/experts/carolina-herrera/latin-america-reaffirms-climate-action-commitment-cop25>
<https://renewablesnow.com/news/dominican-republic-brings-online-48-mw-wind-farm-679949/>
<https://www.nrdc.org/experts/carolina-herrera/latin-america-clean-energy-and-decarbonization-cop25>
<https://dominicanatoday.com/dr/local/2019/12/24/coral-reef-restoration-efforts-in-dominican-republic/>
<https://www.evwind.es/2019/12/25/wind-power-in-dr-commissioning-of-los-guzmancito-wind-farm/72752>
<https://www.evwind.es/2019/12/26/wind-energy-advances-in-dominican-republic/72758>
<https://www.greenmatters.com/p/caribbean-countries-banning-single-use-plastic>
<https://caymannewsservice.com/2019/12/7-caribbean-countries-to-ban-plastic-in-2020/>

President Medina Takes on Educational Reform

- The National Institute of Vocational Technical Training (INFOTEP) has budgeted \$239.2 million for training programs in 2020, an increase of 30% from 2019. This will increase training over all areas of study but will prioritize industries, like: industrial, tourism, hospitality, free zones, service, and agricultural sectors.
- The INFOTEP's increased budget will also provide more training for mechanics, electricians, IT services, hospitality, culinary arts, pharmacy, refrigeration and air conditioning maintenance, and accounting.
- The additional INFOTEP funds will also increase training for students studying business,

entrepreneurship for SMEs, occupational safety and health, radiology, administration and management, finance and accounting, business management and operation, corporate social responsibility, and quality management.

- The Ministry of Education is dedicated to the welfare of its students: delivering over 105,000 computers to students; providing them with training on how to use the technology; delivering robotics equipment for 15,821 students to increase science and math education through technology; delivering modern buses so children can get to school in a comfortable, safe, and reliable way for free, which reduces school dropout rates; delivering 680 musical instruments to enhance the arts programs; and delivering school equipment, materials, and uniforms for each student to help lessen the financial burden of attending school, which reduces dropout rates.
- INFOTEP's increased its training programs to 1,055, of which, there will be 530 in the commerce and service sector, 428 in the industrial sector, and 97 in the agricultural sector.

<https://acento.com.do/2019/actualidad/8759026-infotep-invertira-rd-239-2-millones-en-acciones-formativas-para-el-2020/>
<https://acento.com.do/2019/actualidad/8763574-infotep-incrementa-cantidad-de-programas-formativos-priorizando-la-innovacion/>
<https://acento.com.do/2019/actualidad/8763932-ministerio-de-educacion-mantiene-compromiso-con-bienestar-de-los-estudiantes/>
<https://acento.com.do/2020/actualidad/8774087-programa-de-robotica-ya-opera-en-867-escuelas-dominicanas-informa-el-minerd/>

Sincerely,

James P. Rubin

BALLARD | PARTNERS

Chair, International Policy and Strategy

601 Thirteenth St, NW, Ste 450N

Washington, DC 20005

P: 202.800.5620

F: 202.800.5623

E: rubin@ballardpartners.com